

Proper planning, designing and building of public infrastructure is both a continuous and long term process. Planning for streets, water resource and distribution, and waste water treatment must be done years in advance of when services need to be installed to meet growth needs. Because Lincoln's water and waste water systems are gravity flow designed, there is a logical sequencing of installation that optimizes construction costs and tax payer impact.

Because of the long term planning horizon for infrastructure needs, the City's Comprehensive Plan, its capital improvement plan (CIP) and annual budget must be closely coordinated and tightly integrated. In the past, pressure from developer interests to vary from the Comprehensive Plan both in terms of timing and direction has resulted in infrastructure installation at substantially higher costs than planned installation would have incurred.

The Committee recognizes that development opportunities may present themselves to City Government that are not consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, the CIP or annual budget, but that never the less may be prudent both economically and politically. By maintaining a disciplined, long term planning process that includes an optimal baseline scenario based on sound, logical infrastructure installation, City Government will be positioned to evaluate such opportunities and consider the overall cost impact over and above the baseline scenario to determine if decisions to vary from the baseline plan are prudent.

***Recommendation: City government should maintain a constant planning horizon of at least 12 years for infrastructure improvements for streets, water, waste water, storm sewer and parks based on the most optimal scenario for cost effective design and construction. This capital improvement construction plan should be closely coordinated and consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, and serve as the basis of the CIP and annual budget. When considering variations from this plan, City government should carefully consider infrastructure cost impacts. Decisions to vary from the plan should be minimized. When decisions are made to vary from the plan, the City should seek to recover as much of the cost incurred over the baseline scenario as possible from the developer.***